

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Lori F. Kaplan, Commissioner

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(Text does not include verbatim comments)

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today. I was asked to share with you today my vision for the upcoming year at IDEM. And I will lay out for you a general overview of our focus and directions in the months ahead.

But before I get into specifics, I'd like to give you a sense of the forces that drive my vision, not just of where we at IDEM are going in the next 12 months, but of where we all should be going in the longer-term.

It's important to note that when I use the word "we" in this long-view context, I mean me and IDEM as representatives of government, you as representatives of the business community, and the people we all ultimately answer to.

Think of it as **We**, bold-faced, capital **W**.

As you know, our mission at IDEM is to protect human health and the environment from the effects of pollution. We talk about protecting the environment -- the water, the air, the land -- but in the final analysis, what we at IDEM seek to do first and foremost is protect the people. All of our work stems from that basic premise.

People -- including each of us in this room and our loved ones at home, at school and in their work places -- drink the water, breathe the air and touch the land every day of our lives. All of those harmful substances that pollute the water, air and land pollute our bodies, and our children's bodies, as well.

The people have the ultimate stake in how clean our environment is. So, it should come as no surprise that they have some very definite opinions of how **We** -- business, government and the people, bold-face, capital **W** -- should approach the task of protecting them from the adverse effects of pollution.

Here are some of the latest indications of their thinking on this most important of issues...

Between Jan. 13 and 16 this year, a *CNN/Gallup/USA Today* poll asked 1,027 adults: "Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view:

1. Protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth, or
2. Economic growth should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent."

I'll give you a few seconds to think about that question and make your best guess where people came down on it...

Environment over growth? Growth over environment? The outcome wasn't even close. 70% said the environment; 23% said economic growth.

Now, those are fairly dramatic numbers, and you might say that the simplistic, one-or-the-other choice offered by the question doesn't mean much. But a closer look at historical polling data on the environment shows that this survey is indeed reflective of public opinion. Year after year, in poll after poll, people, in overwhelming numbers, have said they place a high priority on protecting the water, air and land.

I don't want to overload you with numbers, and there's not going to be a quiz when I'm finished, but a few highlights from a *Gallup poll* of 1,004 adults conducted in early April drive this point home.

94 % of those polled said the environmental problems facing our country are serious. Specifically, 17% said "Extremely serious," 38% said "Very serious" and 39% said "Somewhat serious."

Think about those numbers. 94% of the people believe we are facing serious environmental problems in our country. That's nearly everyone. More than half, 55%, say those problems are "Very" or "Extremely" serious.

The poll asked people whether they personally worry about specific types of pollution. And again, the responses were unambiguous:

- Drinking water pollution? 72% said they worry "a great deal" about it; 20% said "a fair amount."
- Pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs? 66% said they worry "a great deal" about it; 24% worry said "a fair amount."

Fundamental to the task of improved water quality is the philosophy that before you can clean up and prevent water pollution, you must know what pollutants are in it and where they come from. In that regard, look for a renewed emphasis on our Total Maximum Daily Load and our watershed assessment programs.

As Cyndi may have explained during the TMDL discussion this morning, we are expanding her staff and budget in an effort to better identify the impairments that exist in our state's surface waters. Once we have a better handle on those impairments, **We** can better identify and address the sources of the problems.

To accomplish that goal, of course, we must look beyond artificial geopolitical boundaries of cities, towns and counties and look at water pollution in the bigger picture, from the perspective of the watershed.

At IDEM, we will continue our scientific sampling for overall water quality, pesticides, *E. coli* and other contaminants on a watershed-by-watershed basis. And we will be working with ad hoc groups of people who live in the watersheds and whose lives are directly affected by them. Our shared goal will be to develop plans to mitigate water pollution in ways that are fiscally responsible, environmentally effective and fair.

We also are enhancing our scientists' tool chests for these important tasks. For example, I mentioned *E. coli*, that nasty little bacteria that tells us that untreated sewage is in the water.

Everyone knows that *E. coli* is a major problem in surface waters throughout our state. But many of you may not know that our abilities to test for *E. coli* historically have been limited by logistics.

Water samples for *E. coli* must be prepared for analysis within six hours of being taken for the samples to be valid. And since the labs we used for *E. coli* testing are located in Indianapolis, our scientists had only six hours from the time they took their first daily sample to return to Indy.

As you can imagine, that dramatically limited their range and the number of samples they could take, which in turn limited the body of information we have on *E. coli* in Indiana waters.

So, to improve our abilities to identify areas of concern and develop plans to reduce and eliminate the problem, we invested in a retrofitted van that is, in effect, an *E. coli* laboratory on wheels. Or, as I fondly refer to it: "The *E. coli* van". You may see it traveling the state and it was on display at the State Fair. Our scientists can now leave Indianapolis on Mondays and spend the week on the road sampling waters in the watershed they're working in, obtaining results as they go.

As a result, we are able to take and process twice as many *E. coli* samples as in the past. And, I'm pleased to tell you, we're saving about \$100,000 a year in the process.

E. coli, of course, comes from a variety of point and nonpoint sources. And we will continue our focus on these areas. Here are two examples.

As you may have heard in recent newscasts, we have tripled the amount of low-interest, State Revolving Loan funds we've given to local municipalities since 1996. These funds can be used to address problems with point-source wastewater treatment plants, sewer lines and combined sewer overflows, all of which can contribute to untreated sewage reaching our surface waters. SRF funds can also be used to upgrade drinking water systems, but thus far, the bulk of the loan dollars have been used for wastewater projects.

Altogether, we've given \$759 million in SRF loans. In Fiscal Year 1999, we awarded 31 loans totaling \$170 million; in FY 2000, those numbers jumped to 81 loans totaling more than \$355 million. We expect to hit the \$1 billion mark very soon.

We also are in the final stages of a longstanding rulemaking process for confined feeding operations to further address the non-point source issues related to manure management at such facilities.

And, working with the Department of Natural Resources and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, we are making \$2 million in grant funds available to livestock producers statewide to combat nonpoint-source pollution from their operations. They can use the grants to take steps to keep manure from migrating into surface and ground water.

We also expect to complete rulemaking for ground water, wetlands and overall Water Quality Standards through Triennial Review in the next year. And we will be wrapping up work on our backlog of NPDES permits, through which we will be requiring communities to develop plans to address combined sewer overflows, another source of untreated waste in our waterways.

Obviously, water will be a major focus for us at IDEM in the near future, but certainly not the only one.

As our assistant commissioner for Air, Janet McCabe, will discuss this afternoon, we will be just as committed to cleaning up our air in the coming months as we will be with cleaning up the water.

By year's end, we expect to have a rule in place that will require utilities and large industrial boilers to reduce their ozone-producing nitrogen oxide emissions by 65% from 1990 levels. That will bring our four ozone-nonattainment counties - Lake, Porter, Clark and Floyd - into compliance with health-based federal regulations on ozone, or smog.

And, as the legal air surrounding the EPA's NOx SIP call clears, we will be moving forward with another NOx rule to meet those standards, as well. You can also expect an increased focus on diesel emissions. Vince gave me some specific questions to address on NOx, and I'll let Janet address the details of the issues in her session right after I'm done.

I'll just touch on a couple other areas of IDEM's focus and direction before hitting you with that last set of numbers.

In the area of solid waste, we'll continue our campaign to eliminate the blight of illegal tire dumps on the Indiana landscape and the human health threats they pose. And we'll proceed with projects to remove toxic chemical threats from Superfund sites in Bloomington and Kokomo and dozens of other, lower-profile sites throughout the state.

Working with local communities, we will aggressively move to convert brownfields from costly eyesores to useful, revenue-producing pieces of property. And in OPPTA, we'll

stay the course with our efforts to work with Indiana industries and businesses -- from child care centers to vehicle repair shops to large manufacturers -- to make their facilities as environmentally friendly as possible.

On that note of cooperation, of partnering to make the environment clean and healthy, I'm ready to throw the last set of numbers at you.

The *Gallup poll* referred to earlier posed this question to its respondents:

"Which of the following should have primary responsibility for solving our nation's environmental problems -- the government, business and industry, or citizens' groups and individual citizens?"

Again, I'll give you a couple seconds to guess what they said...

- 34% said government
- 33% said business and industry
- 32% said citizen's groups and individual citizens, with 1% expressing no opinion.

Now, it seems to me that all of the numbers we've waded through today send a pretty clear message for us, that bold-faced, capital **W**, **We**.

The people we all answer to, through our government and our businesses, understand full well the environmental threats we as a society face, and they want something done about it.

More importantly, they think that **We** - you, me and them - are equally responsible for making the water, air and land safe for them and their children.

They understand that **We** share equal responsibility for accomplishing this most important of tasks, that **We** all must be partners in this effort. I ask you to join me in this cooperative effort to fulfill the people's wishes, not just in the year ahead, but throughout the decade and new century we have just begun.

Thank you.